New Light on India's Plight

By BS Murthy

'What ails India' has been the subject matter of the left-lib right-wing tussle for long, what with the cynics chipping in, in between. However, the right-wing assault on the left-lib 'Idea of India', facilitated by Narendra Modi's nationalist rise in the Indian political firmament, has only increased the intensity of the scrimmage. Be that as it may, this is to throw a new 'right' light on India's 'left' plight that has been Bharat's bane, for a fresh look at it.

In *Kitab al-Hind*, Al-Biruni had stated that *"the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs",* and that was in the 11th century CE. Wasn't it the current American parallel of yore? But still, by the 20th century, the *sangh pariwar*, in order to make Hindus feel proud of being Hindus all again, had no option but to come up with the slogan, *garv se kaho hum hindu hain*. But then, what it was that so adversely affected the Hindu morale that led to the initial decline and the eventual downfall of Bharat that is India is the subject matter of this exercise.

That the Hindus felt what they felt in the 11th century, despite the 1st century evangelical forays into Malabar by St. Thomas and the 8th century Arab conquest of Sind, in a way, is a giveaway of the cause of India's plight, past and present – the abject ignorance of the Hindus about the exclusivist ethos of the expansionist Christian and Islamic faiths, and their utter disregard for the perils their followers posed to India's social harmony, political unity and national integrity. However, given their social ethos of religious amity, this sedate Hindu failure of yore, to grasp the divisive credos of the alien faiths, is understandable, though not anymore. Even so, as the *sanatana* Hindu non-*varnas* were socially kept away from Bharat's *varna* mainstream, the precedence of Buddhism and Jainism that sought to correct this self-negating

social code, were more of reformist offshoots than rebellious branches of the otherwise all-encompassing *sanatana* dharma that, lo, holds Charvaka's atheism too in its Hindu fold!

Whatever, given the inadequate growth of these sub-religious trees, as they failed to provide much of a reformist shade to the non-*varna*s, the practice of their debasement, if not enslavement, persisted in the Hindu social arrangement. Sadly but inevitably, this social wedge became the Achilles heel for the proselytizing Christians and Muslims to pierce through the Hindu body politic. Even so, the Muslims needed the might of their sword and power of patronage and the Christians, the guile of enticement and the guise of charity for their religious headway. However, it is a testimony to the Indian social resilience that together they could only uproot, up to a quarter of its Hindu roots that too in a millennium. Ironically though, it is this intellectual complacency that makes the Hindus the 'once bitten not twice shy' kind, showing a blind eye to the unabated conversion of their disgruntled sections into these alien faiths to India's demographic detriment.

Just the same, Maryam Jameelah in her book, *Islam and Orientalism,* lamented that *"If the Mughal monarchs had assumed their responsibilities as Muslim rulers and organized intensive tabliq or missionary work, the majority of Indians would have embraced Islam and hence the necessity for partition and all the disasters that followed in its wake, never would have arisen."* If only Jameelah had read Al-Biruni, she could have envisaged the haughty hurdles of the Hindu *varna*s that the Mughal *tabliq* had to surmount. Besides, as the unceasing *tabliq* would have entailed a perpetual *jihad,* probably, the Sultans staid put in their palaces annexed with harems in the limited lands that came under their sway. All the same, they spared no efforts to pluck the low hanging Hindu 'non-*varna*' fruits to substantially fill their Islamic religious baskets.

Eventually though, signaling the end to the eight-hundred years old partial Muslim rule, Robert Clive planted the British colonial foot in the Battle of Plassey, plotted by Jagat Seth's avenging 'financial' hand at Siraj-ud-Daulah's insult of him. Nevertheless, the Nehruvian school curriculum, as if to deprive the Hindu kids of the feel good revenge, made the game-changing event seem an all-Muslim affair with Mir Jaffar as the quisling. Whatever, given the Mughal decline by then, but for this Cliveian twist to the Mughal legacy, it is not inconceivable that the Marathas, Rajputs and the valorous rest would have given a Hindu turn to the Muslim history. Be that as it may, by ending the Muslim influence in India, the British had enabled the Hindus to feel at home in their ancestral land, at long last that is. But all that turned out to be a false start for them as the British Macaulayzed their educational mechanism to uproot generations of Hindus from their *sanatana* grassroots to upend their cultural legacy from their collective consciousness. Hence, as if to prove that 'there's a price to pay for freedom', history threw the Hindus out of the frying pan into fire. That it affected an encore for them is the irony of India's history!

Not just that, the British pauperized Bharat by ruining its industry and degrading its economy, from some 24% of the world's GDP to around 4% of it before they had to leave its shores for their own safety. However, it's another matter though that the centuries-long Islamic turbulence had earlier brought down the Indian economy by ten notches or so. Even as the British rule impoverished India that hurt all, still the Muslims couldn't care less for their holy book hath it that *"Naught is the life of the world save a pastime and a sport. Better far is the abode of the Hereafter for those who keep their duty (to Allah). Have ye then no sense?"* Not only that, having barred the secular education to their kids for the fear of its intellectual corruption of their irrational belief system, they had confined them to madrasas for further cementing their blind faith in their tiny heads. As ummah is change averse, the Muslim conditions apply even now and maybe into the foreseeable future as well. Thus, it's no wonder that this inimical feature of the Muslim character has become the cornerstone of the electoral strategy of the cynical politics – Give Muslims their Islam and be done with them.

But then, even as the patriotic fervour began to awake the Hindu nationalism, the Islamic craving for a Muslim homeland started taking its political shape, both anathemas to the British colonial masters. It was then that the much-wronged Hindus needed a visionary leader to guide them to their rightful place under the sun but instead they got the silly but wily Gandhi, who sadly fouled it for them, so to say, for all times to come. However, Muslims found their messiah in Jinnah, who delivered the hoped-for Pakistan to them, so to say, on the Hindu platter of his own ancestors. Surely, Gandhi was erudite enough to know about the Muslim religious obligation to strive for the establishment of an Islamic rule in dar al-harb, which India was, and still is for them. Even then, instead of tackling the ummah on the separatist front, by appeasing the Musalmans in every which way, he naively persisted in his attempts to avert India's inevitable partition with disastrous consequences. It's thus, even as he was unequivocal about the Hindu non-violence, he was ambivalent on the Muslim violence, be it Moplah massacres or Swami Shraddhanand's murder to cite but two examples.

More so, it was Gandhi's lack of foresight leading up to India's partition that hurt the Hindus the most, to appreciate which his wooly Hindu-Muslim *sadbhavana* should be contrasted with Ambedkar's robust take on the Muslim psyche: *"…the allegiance of a Muslim does not rest on his domicile in the country which is his but on the faith to which he belongs. To the Muslim ibi bene ibi patria is unthinkable. Wherever there is the rule of Islam, there is his own country. In other words, Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin."* Thus, failing to see the Muslim intent to break India, even after personally witnessing the

Direct Action Day's virulent violence, he remained pigheadedly adamant against India's inevitable, even necessary partition, albeit with the population exchange on the respective religious grounds, advocated by Sardar Patel, not to speak of Ambedkar. Just the same, as if he had a premonition of the post-partition calamity in the offing, on April 6, 1947 he lectured that *"Hindus should not harbour anger in their hearts against Muslims even if the latter wanted to destroy them. Even if the Muslims want to kill us all we should face death bravely. If they established their rule after killing Hindus we would be ushering in a new world by sacrificing our lives."*

If only Gandhi had a knack for realpolitik, seeing the writing on the Muslim-fractured Indian wall, he should have brought about an equitable religious separation in an amicable manner, which would have saved the catastrophic outcomes of the haphazard partition for Hindus as well as Muslims, more so for the former. But yet, he showed no remorse for his foolhardiness in opposing a planned 'population exchange based' partition, but instead had allegedly stated that Hindu and Sikh women should get willingly raped by their Muslim violators. Capping all that, his incalculable harm to India lay in the unilateral anointment of Nehru, the most English of them all (in his own words) as its putative Prime Minister by immorally sidelining the Hindu nationalist Patel, opted by the congress party to lead the nascent nation.

Not just that, with his fast-unto-death stunt later, he coerced the Indian government into releasing to Pakistan its share of the partition funds that is in the midst of their military engagement! Sadly for India, this anti-national stance of Gandhi on his utopian moral ground turned out to be the proverbial last straw on Godse's patriotic back. Whatever, sensing a godsend opportunity to grind his political axe in Godse's senseless act, Nehru cleverly dubbed the murder of a maverick as the martyrdom of the Mahatma. But equally cynically, so as to smoothen the way for the Muslim aggrandizement in India, he forged the ant-communal hammer on the anvil of that human tragedy for smothering the resurgent Hindu nationalism. Why, he did proclaim that he was *"English by education, Muslim by culture and Hindu by accident."*

However, his Muslim affinity, as can be seen from his midnight missive to Padmaja Naidu, wherein he penned his 'relief' at the British military action that killed 400 Bihari farmers indulged in a retaliatory Hindu rioting after the Noakhali Muslim carnage, was more cynical than cultural. What is worse, it is an unambiguous giveaway of his anti-Hindu disposition that he was wont to exhibit throughout albeit in the secular garb. Here are a few lines from that 'insensitive' letter for all to ponder over:

''.. I learnt that the military had fired on a peasant mob in the rural areas some miles from here, and about 400 had been killed. Normally such a thing would have horrified me. But would you believe it? I was greatly relieved to hear it!"

"And so when the news came that they have been stopped at last in one place and that 400 of them had died, I felt that the balance had been very slightly righted."

Oh, bemoan Gandhi for having entrusted the fate of the trusting Hindus to such a cynical person, who was emotionally as well as intellectually anti-Hindu. But then, the crux of India's plight is that both these crass characters were at chasing the mirages of their false images - Gandhi as an apostle of non-violence and Nehru as the messiah of non-alignment – by turning its interests into a desert of despair, which apparance is seldom appreciated by the wronged Hindus themselves.

No less significant is the start of Nehru's epochal *Tryst with Destiny* address to the Indian Constituent Assembly – *"Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny; and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially"* – that is an intellectual indicator of not only his limited ambition for the independent India but also his lack of belief in the Hindu potential to reclaim its ancient glory. But, lo, as India's ill-fate would have it, he happened to helm it for the first seventeen years in its making as an independent nation! However, it's true that he shaped the 'temples of modern India' in the form of giant public sector undertakings and ushered in the elite Indian Institutes of Technology, ostensibly to train their *pujaris*. Nevertheless, as it turned out, these prized pundits invariably sailed to the American shores for 'bettering themselves' and, in time, the Nehruvian temples were turned into white elephants by their 'socialist' attendants. That's not all to the litany of the national, social, moral, material, and political ills that have come to plague India, courtesy his unsavoury legacy, made worse by his daughter Indira and her daughter-in-law Sonia, who lorded over India for long. No denying, there are books and books, about India's plight, but doubt if any of them pinpoint the root causes of the malady, and what follows is but an attempt at that.

So to say, to enable the Musalmans to feel at home in the Hindu India, for reasons better left for researchers to explore in the future, Nehru had ensured that the Hindus have no cause and effect to feel it is their own country, which proved to be its double jeopardy. It's thus, with its caste-centric Hindus lacking nationalist impulse and its Muslim residuals devoid of any sense of belonging to it (recall Ambedkar's words) forming its demographic triad, with the 'neither here nor there' closet Christians, India has become the habitat of varied interest groups but not a unified nation with a unitary purpose. But still, the historic situation was never beyond redemption, if only the Hindus were made to believe that in essence India belonged to them and them only and so it was their bounden duty to make it great again, morally, spiritually, as well as materially, never mind the non-committal minorities, by and large that is. However, his dynastic successors, not content with engineering the caste

divisions to fracture the Hindu mandate, had fostered the captive Muslim vote-bank to willy-nilly put India on the demographic path of future partition.

But at long last, as if to give itself a rightful turn to its wrongful history, India had induced its indifferent Hindu electorate to vote out Nehru's dubious descendants, who have become its nemeses since long, and vote in the nationalist Narendra Modi. Hitting the ground running, Modi had diagnosed India's true malaise and started curing the same by restoring the Hindu religious virility and infusing Bharat's cultural pride in the Indian national consciousness. It's as if, so to say overnight, India has regained its lost Hindu *josh* on its march towards Modi's *Atmanirbhar* Bharat, the veracity of which the Operation *Sindoor* has validated. By now it is apparent, more than ever, that the Hindus have come to believe that India is theirs to cherish, nourish, and protect against all odds and in every eventuality. What is more heartening is, the Hindus have come to believe that like the *Sindoor, Atmanirbhar* too is not a one-off thing, but an ongoing endeavour to usher in the *Vikasit* Bharat after Modi's heart.

But yet, India has to contend with the nefarious nexus of the intransigent Islamists, obscurantist Muslims and their left-lib cohorts, who leave no stone unturned to impede its progress in every possible way, judicial activism included. So, it is only by defanging **this venomous system that Bharat can become v***ikasit,* and hopefully Modi would be able to do that in time so that the present and the future generations of Hindus would be blessed to be able to echo their ancestors' modified motto, '*there is no country but theirs, no culture like theirs, no society like theirs, no democracy like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs, no economy like theirs and no military like theirs'.*